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County Employment and Wages in North Dakota — Third Quarter 2017

North Dakota's only large county, Cass, had an average weekly wage of \$934 in the third quarter of 2017, 1.6 percent lower than one year ago, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with 2016 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Nationally, the average weekly wage decreased 0.6 percent over the year to \$1,021 in the third quarter of 2017. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that although Cass County's wages were below the U.S. average, nine of the state's smaller counties, those with employment below 75,000, had wages above that for the nation. (See [table 1](#).)

Employment in Cass County fell 0.1 percent from September 2016 to September 2017. Cass County's employment level of 118,400 accounted for 28.2 percent of total employment within the state. Nationally, employment rose 1.0 percent during this 12-month period, as 283 of the 346 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 72.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 52 smaller counties in North Dakota. Average weekly wages varied among these counties, with four having wages above \$1,300 and two with wages under \$550. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

Cass County (-1.6 percent) was 1 of the 265 largest U.S. counties to record an over-the-year decrease in average weekly wages. Mercer, N.J., had the largest wage drop, down 8.8 percent from the third quarter of 2016. Wyandotte, Kan., was second with a wage decrease of 6.0 percent, followed by Clark, Nev. (-5.3 percent); Somerset, N.J. (-5.0 percent), and Clay, Mo. (-4.8 percent).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 71 experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage increase in average weekly wages (8.4 percent), followed by Union, N.J. (8.2 percent); Elkhart, Ind. (6.5 percent); Forsyth, N.C. (5.3 percent); and Maui + Kalawao, Hawaii (4.6 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Cass County's \$934 average weekly wage placed in the middle third among the 346 largest U.S. counties, ranking 176th. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties in the nation with an average weekly wage of \$2,320. San Mateo, Calif., was second at \$2,123, followed by San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,954); New York, N.Y. (\$1,889); and Washington, D.C. (\$1,759). Among the largest U.S. counties, Cameron, Texas (\$612), had the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Horry, S.C. (\$633); Hidalgo, Texas (\$649); and Webb, Texas (\$672).

Average weekly wages in North Dakota's smaller counties

Forty-three of the 52 counties in North Dakota with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,021. Nine small counties had above-average wages, all located in the western portion of the state. The highest wage was in Williams County at \$1,428, followed by McKenzie (\$1,347) and Oliver (\$1,335). Sheridan County had the lowest wage in the state, averaging \$466 in the third quarter of 2017. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 53 counties in North Dakota were considered, 10 had average weekly wages of \$649 or lower, 12 had wages from \$650 to \$749, 14 had wages from \$750 to \$849, and 17 had wages of \$850 or higher. (See [chart 1](#).)

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the [Technical Note](#) or visit www.bls.gov/cew.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2016 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2017 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn16.htm. The 2017 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2018.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 23, 2018.

QCEW Publication Acceleration and Conversion to Two Data Releases

The national QCEW publication process is accelerating for a more timely release. Beginning with the national fourth quarter 2017 release, QCEW data will be published in two parts. The current County Employment and Wages news release and associated data will be accelerated and published first. The full QCEW data release will occur two weeks later, accompanied by a data release notice.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.9 million employer reports cover 144.5 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in

the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the largest county in North Dakota, third quarter 2017

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2016-17 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, third quarter 2016-17 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	144,464.4	1.0	--	\$1,021	--	-0.6	--
North Dakota	419.2	-1.0	--	953	22	-1.2	34
Cass, N.D.	118.4	-0.1	287	934	176	-1.6	217

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in North Dakota, third quarter 2017

Area	Employment September 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	144,464,425	\$1,021
North Dakota	419,248	953
Adams	962	755
Barnes	4,506	721
Benson	1,990	733
Billings	657	645
Bottineau	2,526	783
Bowman	1,526	755
Burke	676	1,008
Burleigh	56,799	946
Cass	118,390	934
Cavalier	1,455	776
Dickey	1,916	669
Divide	840	946
Dunn	2,114	1,290
Eddy	744	620
Emmons	998	632
Foster	1,656	800
Golden Valley	652	665
Grand Forks	41,132	851
Grant	542	644
Griggs	868	660
Hettinger	724	798
Kidder	724	639
LaMoure	1,426	679
Logan	632	546
McHenry	1,319	816
McIntosh	1,090	634
McKenzie	9,447	1,347
McLean	3,556	1,054
Mercer	5,195	1,318
Morton	11,143	844
Mountrail	5,689	1,228
Nelson	1,010	614
Oliver	720	1,335
Pembina	3,756	869
Pierce	1,738	719
Ramsey	5,868	746
Ransom	2,046	667
Renville	741	757
Richland	7,899	776
Rolette	4,366	701
Sargent	3,108	799
Sheridan	252	466
Sioux	1,626	801
Slope	131	1,140
Stark	18,788	1,119
Steele	624	898
Stutsman	11,341	801
Towner	735	701
Traill	3,485	773
Walsh	5,362	740
Ward	31,574	913
Wells	1,565	639
Williams	28,108	1,428

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2017

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	144,464.4	1.0	\$1,021	--	-0.6	--
Alabama	1,941.1	0.8	859	37	-1.3	38
Alaska	335.4	-0.7	1,025	15	-2.8	50
Arizona	2,760.1	2.4	948	24	-0.2	10
Arkansas	1,213.0	0.6	788	49	-0.6	19
California	17,153.4	1.7	1,215	4	0.5	4
Colorado	2,625.9	1.9	1,067	9	0.5	4
Connecticut	1,676.3	0.1	1,179	6	-2.2	47
Delaware	443.0	0.4	1,026	14	0.4	6
District of Columbia	764.7	0.7	1,759	1	1.3	2
Florida	8,305.8	-0.2	896	29	-1.1	31
Georgia	4,343.5	1.3	961	21	-0.9	27
Hawaii	652.5	0.4	953	22	-0.3	13
Idaho	722.3	2.7	778	50	-0.5	16
Illinois	5,969.6	0.5	1,057	10	-0.3	13
Indiana	3,044.0	0.6	861	36	-0.6	19
Iowa	1,546.1	-0.2	855	38	-2.2	47
Kansas	1,376.4	-0.1	839	41	-2.1	46
Kentucky	1,890.4	0.5	837	42	-2.4	49
Louisiana	1,904.3	-0.1	869	33	-1.7	42
Maine	621.9	0.7	821	46	-0.5	16
Maryland	2,661.8	0.5	1,105	8	-1.7	42
Massachusetts	3,568.0	0.9	1,265	2	-0.9	27
Michigan	4,334.3	0.9	964	20	-1.1	31
Minnesota	2,883.0	1.1	1,030	13	-2.0	45
Mississippi	1,129.1	-0.1	729	51	-1.4	39
Missouri	2,805.8	0.9	878	31	-1.2	34
Montana	468.6	0.9	793	48	0.1	8
Nebraska	973.3	-0.2	850	39	-0.8	23
Nevada	1,337.7	2.9	914	26	-3.8	51
New Hampshire	659.1	0.6	1,022	16	-0.4	15
New Jersey	4,043.6	1.1	1,156	7	-1.5	41
New Mexico	816.0	0.3	823	45	-0.8	23
New York	9,329.8	1.2	1,219	3	-0.2	10
North Carolina	4,348.0	1.3	904	27	-0.7	21
North Dakota	419.2	-1.0	953	22	-1.2	34
Ohio	5,383.6	0.6	920	25	-0.8	23
Oklahoma	1,593.3	0.7	843	40	-1.2	34
Oregon	1,905.3	1.8	969	19	-0.1	9
Pennsylvania	5,836.5	1.0	1,002	17	-1.1	31
Rhode Island	484.5	0.8	973	18	-1.8	44
South Carolina	2,027.2	0.8	828	43	-0.5	16
South Dakota	426.2	0.4	803	47	-0.7	21
Tennessee	2,953.3	1.1	903	28	-1.2	34
Texas	12,008.9	1.4	1,032	12	-1.0	29
Utah	1,444.1	2.6	879	30	-0.2	10
Vermont	310.3	0.1	869	33	-1.4	39
Virginia	3,843.6	1.0	1,053	11	-0.8	23
Washington	3,343.4	2.0	1,208	5	1.7	1
West Virginia	694.0	0.2	826	44	1.1	3
Wisconsin	2,866.9	0.5	876	32	-1.0	29
Wyoming	276.2	0.3	868	35	0.3	7
Puerto Rico	862.8	-3.1	509	(3)	-2.7	(3)
Virgin Islands	36.9	-1.1	763	(3)	-1.9	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

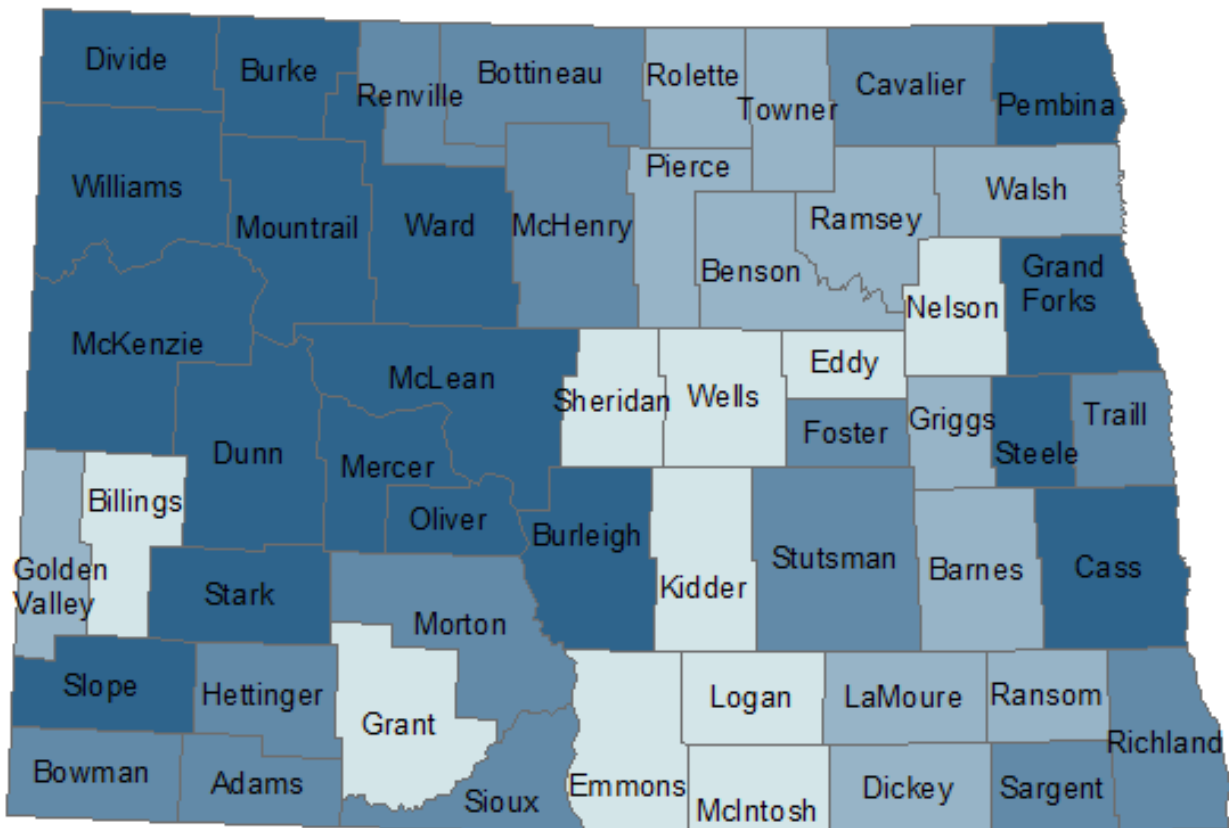
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in North Dakota, third quarter 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Average weekly wages

(U.S. Average = \$1,021)

- \$850 or higher
- \$750 - \$849
- \$650 - \$749
- \$649 or lower